

The *Mountain Viewsletter*

Mountain View Elementary School
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Principal's Message

This month I would like to focus on the results from the Parent Survey completed last spring. All of the surveys completed by staff, students and parents are looked at very carefully by many different groups and are used to improve areas where feedback indicates we need improvement.

The parent survey results were looked at by the School Council (a small group of parents and teachers), the Principal's Advisory Committee (a group of staff representing all grade levels and departments) and the PTO. Overall satisfaction is very high at Mountain View, and we are very proud of that. The lowest percentage was 93% agreement with the statement:

"Both my child and I are kept aware of how my child is doing in school."

Based on the comments submitted for the question, all of the groups who looked at the survey results suggested we take the following steps:

1. Use a newsletter article to explain how seriously we use the results from our surveys to improve.
2. Explain the different ways the school communicates with parents and students.
3. Explain how the parent conference schedule works and revise the letter that goes home before the first conference day.

First, I want you to know that we look at the survey results very carefully and we take all of your comments seriously. These results are discussed with the groups I mentioned previously, but the results are also shared with the Superintendent and the School Committee and are used to guide the school staff in writing the Mountain View SMART Goals.

Second, I want to make sure you all know the different ways we try to communicate with you and how you can communicate with us. This *newsletter* is one form of communication that we send out every other month.

Blackboard Connect, our phone/email messaging system is probably the communication tool you are most familiar with. I try to only use that for important information, as I know receiving multiple phone calls can be annoying.

Letters/flyers are often sent home from the school and the PTO. Checking your child's backpack nightly is a good practice, as those letters often end up in the bottom of the bag. The Mountain View *website*

(<http://eastlongmeadowma.gov/index.aspx?NID=424>) is the home of our school calendar, which is always kept up-to-date. The website also has the lunch menu, pictures and videos of special events. *Continued on next page.*

The “Parent & Student Page” is the place to go. Also on the website is a link to the “*Staff Email Directory*,” which is the best way to communicate with teachers since they rarely have time during the school day to use the *telephone*. If you do call the school, teachers will return your call within 24 hours. Eventually, the elementary schools will use a system similar to BPMS and ELHS where you can log into a website and see your child’s grades, but this is a couple of years down the road, as we need to continue to adjust to using electronic grading and our new report cards.

Lastly, Mountain View and Mapleshade have two scheduled half days per year for parent conferences. Typically, teachers send home a form letter to parents who they feel would benefit from coming in on the first conference day. It is impossible for them to meet with all parents in a 2.5-hour window. If parents aren’t available on that day, or a parent requests a conference, but that day’s slots are full, teachers are always willing to accommodate by meeting before school, on a prep period or after school. The second conference day is reserved for parents who have not had a conference yet. Again, if that day doesn’t work for parents, teachers are willing to accommodate. Starting next year, everyone will receive a conference letter before the first conference day, letting parents know whether or not the teacher feels it is necessary to meet on that first day. Hopefully this will alleviate the confusion about how the conference days work.

If you have any other questions about the MV forms of communication, or the survey results in general, please let me know.

~ Elaine Santaniello

SAVE THE DATE



Computers



Are you an Eagle Finger typist? An Eagle Finger typist, (also known as the hunt and peck technique) uses one or two fingers when typing, this seems to be the result of our touch screen society. Instead of relying on the memorized position of keys, the typist must find each key by sight. Use of this method may also prevent the typist from being able to see what has been typed without glancing away from the keys and requires the typist to look back and forth between the keyboard and source copy. This method of typing can be very time consuming.

Now think back to when perhaps you learned Touch Typing. Remember the home row? Learning this method (with practice) allows the typist the freedom of not looking at the keyboard, while allowing the typist to look just at the source copy or the computer screen. Another interesting note on using touch screen technology is that this technology seems to automatically capitalize the first word of sentences and capitalizes the first letter in recognized names. Students frequently ask if they need to capitalize their name and the incoming classes are unfamiliar with how to make a capital letter using a computer keyboard.

Students at Mountain View are using a variety of different technology devices. iPads, laptops with a touch pad and Chromebox computers that use a mouse to navigate. Classrooms are using the laptops more often for typing final drafts and projects. Many of our students are finding the task slow and daunting because the majority are using the hunt and peck method.

We encourage students to learn and practice Touch Typing. A fun program to use that is free and internet based is Dance Mat Typing <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z3c6tfr>. Google Chrome also has some typing apps that you can install from their web store. Perhaps you can encourage your child/children to practice learning Touch Typing at home. A few minutes a day can make a difference.

Since September, students have been using the lab to take the STAR test, to learn about Digital Footprints, and to learn how to use their Google accounts and Google products (Drive, Docs, Slides). Students are showing their creativity as they learn how these programs work and what options are available. 5th and 4th grades just learned about creating a graph/chart that can be added to a slide or document. 3rd graders are working with Google Docs.

~Mrs. Goguen

Health Room



Do you know that there is something that your child can do to help their physical, mental, and social health all at the same time? Practice good hygiene. When children and adults maintain good hygiene it helps them 1) physically by preventing illness, 2) mentally by helping them feel good about themselves, and 3) socially by helping others feel good about them.

So as a reminder, good hygiene includes keeping hair clean by shampooing frequently; brushing daily, using special shampoos if dandruff is a problem: keeping the mouth clean, brushing teeth at least twice each day, flossing daily, seeing the dentist regularly: keeping your body healthy by doing the above as well as eating healthy food and remaining active.

See your child's pediatrician about deodorant recommendations. If your child plays sports after school they will need to shower or wash afterwards. If your child sweats a lot, an extra shirt for after recess might be reasonable. Students won't always notice when they are in need of improving their daily hygiene so

keep your eyes and nose open. Help your child learn the habits of good hygiene. It will keep him or her looking, smelling and feeling their best. And it will help others feel good about them too!

~Mrs. Thomas

Gifted & Talented



Greetings from the GT Classroom! Children this term have been developing their analytical thinking skills.

Third graders are investigating all of the attributes of 2D shapes. Students have named shapes, drawn shapes, solved problems using shapes, built shapes with popsicles, K'Nex and Tangrams, and defined shapes by their attributes. The children have learned hand motions to describe the attributes of shapes; i.e., angles, endpoints, line segments, lines, rays, parallel lines, perpendicular lines, and intersecting lines. Knowing the special attributes of each shape allows them to make clean definitions for quadrilaterals like squares, rectangles, parallelograms, and trapezoids. Understanding angles helps them differentiate between triangles and other polygons. Ask your 3rd grader to show you their hand and body movements to depict these terms.

Fourth graders are analyzing using Venn diagrams to classify and sort information. Students started out analyzing 4 attributes (color, shape, size, and width) in order to sort geometric shapes. Students then moved into using a Venn diagram to classify and sort, not only shapes, but also greatest common factors, character/animal traits, and math story problems. Now students are engaging in sorting information for both word and figural analogies. Students must look closely, think carefully and use both their verbal and spatial planning skills to accomplish these analogies.

Our LEGO WEDO unit will be starting with our second term. Students will learn a programming language, build and program motorized LEGO robots, and create storyboards around their constructions. There will also be lessons on gears, pulleys, and levers to reinforce how their structures work.

Fifth graders are building and demonstrating how simple machines are designed to make “work” easier. Reading schematics and spatial planning are an integral part of being able to build a structure. Humans have to “see” in three dimensions to create models. Students recognize simple and compound machines in their everyday lives and learn to analyze the physics of how the machine works. We then use math formulas to determine the mechanical advantage of each simple machine. As students demonstrate their models, they work on their presentation and audience skills.

The EV3 robotics program will also be starting in the second term. The precision of programming becomes more complex as students learn more detailed coding, as well as on brick programming. The initial units teach the students the basics. Then their creativity finds an arena as students are presented with challenges to solve.

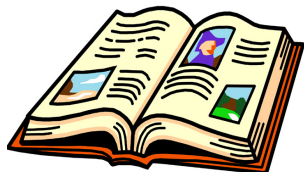
December 5 - 9 is our official Hour of Code week. All students will have an opportunity to learn computer coding during their enrichment classes that week. Some students may decide to sign on for free courses after being introduced to the topic through fun coding activities and videos explaining how coding offers many future opportunities in a plethora of fields.

Students demonstrating what they have learned and connecting it to the real world allows for deeper understanding of concepts. Analyzing how attributes are related, connected or different supports authentic learning.

~ Mrs. Barry



Library



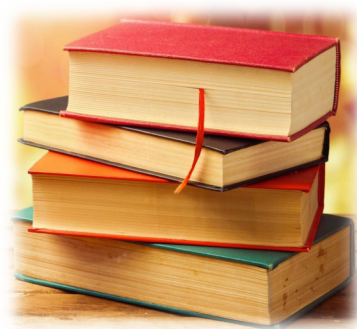
Our **MV Library Celebration Book Club** is a wonderful way to celebrate an occasion and to help our library maintain a quality collection. Forty books were chosen last year to honor students and teachers. More information will go home in January.

Our Mountain View families are able to access all five school library catalogs using the link below. If students would like to request a book from another school library they just need to speak to Mrs. Galaska. <http://elpsma.booksys.net/>

Please encourage your students to clean out the bottom of their backpack or supply them with a plastic bag to protect their books so that our collection can be maintained and preserved for others to enjoy. The biggest culprit is a leaky water bottle!

~ Mrs. Galaska

Literacy Corner



A New Way to Encourage Kids to Read

Excerpt taken from *Education World*, September 2016

Thanks to modern technology, there are now many ways to read books. While you have a right to prefer the old fashioned method of physically turning pages, you should know that there are tons of options that might even have the capability to change the way you or your children read forever.

Check out what *Education World* is calling the Best Reading Apps of 2016.

Novel Effect: The Modern Evolution of Storytelling

Novel Effect, which launched last week, is a free app for Apple devices that uses voice recognition technology to play "theme music and sound effects at just the right moment." Designed to capture the attention of all child learners, the app was conceptualized by a veteran special education teacher of children with visual impairments. Melody Furze co-founded Novel Effect after being determined to make reading an immersive activity for those who might not be able to see a story's illustrations. When you sit down to read a book to your child this week, consider checking out Novel Effect to switch things up.

BookTrack: Create Soundtracks for Books

Similar to Novel Effect, BookTrack reinvigorates reading as an activity by supplementing reading with accompanying music and sounds. BookTrack lets the user customize the soundtrack by adding background music, ambient sound, and sound effects and even adjusting the pace to an individual's reading speed. For users interested in trying the product out, the company currently offers over 26,000 free-to-use music and ambient audio tracks. For teachers interested in the product, its recent integration with Microsoft Office 365 makes it more accessible than ever.

Free Books: Download the Classics

This app provides users free access to 23,469 classic books. Free Books represents a great opportunity for you to break up your recent reads with some timeless classics. As a plus, the app includes a dictionary, notes, and bookmark capabilities to really accentuate your free reading experience. It's not rated the top free book app for no reason, that's for sure.

~ Ms. Hucul

Grade Three



The holidays are fast approaching and as usual, the third grade is very busy. We are involved in many academic and seasonal events. In Math, we will be teaching time, measurement, and addition and subtraction of 2 and 3 digit numbers. We still encourage parents to practice basic facts at home. Our Words Their Way program is up and running! Students are focusing on spelling patterns and working hard to incorporate them into their everyday writing.

We had an in-house field trip on November 16th. Forest Park's Zoo on the Go program was here to share different types of animals in conjunction with our Living Things Unit in science. Students learned about how different adaptations help animals to survive. A big thank you to our PTO for making this possible!

In keeping with the spirit of the season, all third graders will be able to participate in our special holiday activity "Holidays Around the World" which is planned for December 20-22nd. On these days, students will have a chance to experience some of the different customs practiced worldwide throughout the holidays, as well as visit all of the other third grade classrooms.

Grade Four

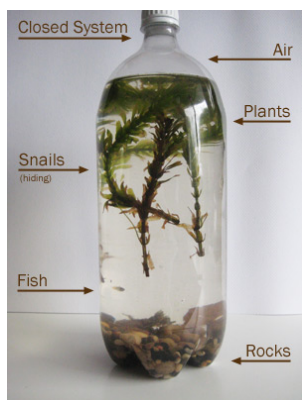


Gobble, Gobble, Gobble!

The fourth grade is wrapping up metric conversions and diving into a plateful of Eureka multiplication. In science, we have been digging into land and water with a sprinkling of various earth studies. Others are engaging in energy and forces of motion. We extended some of our scientific learning by having an exciting STEM field trip to Interskate 91.

The fourth grade continues to travel around the U.S. learning about the various regions, landmarks, and capitals that make up our country. In ELA we continue to pursue various reading strategies, read a variety of texts, and other *stuff-ing!*

Grade Five



As the holidays arrive we are working hard in 5th grade. In math, students completed units on number sense as well as multiplication. We are moving through division and into higher level thinking concepts.

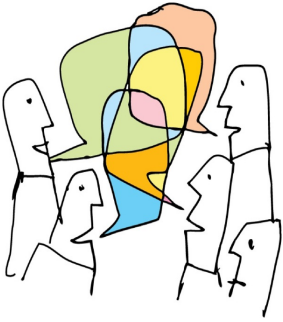
English language arts continues to be focused around the reading of novels, vocabulary, and fine tuning writing skills. Students have had the opportunity to read a wide variety of genres this year to become well-rounded readers.

Explorers are now the focus in social studies. Students will be working to create power point presentations on their assigned explorers.

In science, we will be making the transition from plants to (((sound))), as well as ecosystems. Students are working with experiments to help make the science come to life.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Speech & Language



Speech and language students are improving their speech intelligibility by working on the their articulation by producing their “old sounds” a new way. They start with the sound in isolation coupled with a vowel, then on to words, then sentences, then paragraphs, and conversation. The only way to improve sound production is practice, practice. Our pragmatics group is working on identifying the size of the problem and role-playing different reactions. The group then generated their own problems and reactions and we discussed if the reaction matched the size of the problem. Students working on following directions both written and orally presented made different crafts for Thanksgiving as well as learning and explaining game directions. Wishing you a very Happy Thanksgiving.

~ Mrs. Henderson

PTO News



Happy Almost Thanksgiving from your busy PTO! Did you know that one of the scientifically proven ways to boost your happiness is to list three things you are thankful for every day? If you have a tradition of giving thanks out loud at Thanksgiving dinner, consider making it a nightly dinner tradition all year round with your kids.

Can we tell you what we're thankful for? All we've accomplished this fall!

We're thankful for our successful fundraising efforts. The Mountain View community purchased over 120 pies from Atkins Farms, which raised more than \$600 for our school. School Spirit T-shirt sales also brought in almost \$1,000! That's a lot of school spirit. The Yankee candle catalog sales went well but we still need about \$700 in online sales between now and January 11th to meet that goal. I think we can do it! Just enter our group code, **990015807**, when you shop for all your holiday scents and easy gift giving ideas. Lastly, just this week, the oh-so-helpful coupon books went home with your children too. This is the last fundraiser of 2016 (collective sigh of relief!).

How many people shop on Amazon for the holidays? Ah! Don't all yell at once! A lot of you do and did you know that if you go to smile.amazon.com and choose Mountain View School Parent Teacher Organization INC as your charitable organization a portion of ALL your online shopping will automatically get donated? All year? Pretty amazing!

All in all, we are proud to announce that our fundraising efforts since September have raised nearly \$7,000! That's enough to buy seven really fancy bicycles or one hundred really cheap bicycles! (See if your Mountain View student can work out the math). But instead of buying any bicycles, the PTO is using these funds for field trips like Zoo on the Go, Interskate 91, and hosting author Richard Sobol to present one of his books about cultures from around the world. We'll also be having a presenter from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center speaking with students during the day and parents in the evening about social media the week of January 23rd for Anti-Bullying week – we hope to see a lot of you there.

We're also thankful for those of you who continue to look for ways to get involved. Looking ahead, the PTO would greatly appreciate anyone who can contribute a small gift/gift card for prizes for our February 8th Bingo night. We will also need lots of parents to get involved with the spring Talent Show (April 7th), Teacher Appreciation Luncheon and Spring Book Fair. Please don't forget to like our FB page where you can keep up with all of our events, surveys and opportunities to help.